

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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State Declares Air Quality Action Day

Unhealthy Air Pollution Levels Predicted for Today and Tomorrow

Concord, NH -- Air pollution concentrations are expected to reach unhealthy levels in the **southern half of the state (Cheshire, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford, and Sullivan Counties) and at elevations over 3000 feet, on June 26 and 27.** State officials are calling for an Air Quality Action Day and advise individuals in these areas -- especially children, active or older adults, and anyone with heart disease or respiratory conditions such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis -- to take precautions to protect their health by avoiding prolonged outdoor activity. Even healthy individuals may experience mild health effects and should limit strenuous or prolonged outdoor activities.

The NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) expects concentrations of fine particle pollution to be unhealthy for sensitive individuals in the above-mentioned regions on **June 26 and 27.** These particles can cause adverse health effects in people with heart or lung disease and may reduce visibility. In addition, concentrations of ozone, the primary ingredient in smog, are also expected to reach unhealthy levels in the affected region. The combination of these two pollutants at elevated concentrations may intensify health effects.

The elevated levels of air pollution are a result of winds blowing into the region from the large urban areas to our southwest and from the industrial Midwest. High temperatures and bright sunshine are also contributing factors since they aid in the production of air pollutants. Conditions are expected to improve on Thursday, as cooler, cleaner air moves into the region.

Fine particle pollution can significantly aggravate existing diseases such as asthma and bronchitis. When exposed to particle pollution, people with heart disease may experience chest pain, palpitations, shortness of breath, and fatigue. People with existing lung diseases may not be able to breathe as deeply or vigorously as normal and may experience symptoms such as coughing and shortness of breath. Symptoms of ozone exposure include coughing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain when inhaling deeply, and shortness of breath. The severity of the health effects increases as fine particle and ozone concentrations increase.

For further information about potential adverse health effects from particle pollution and ozone exposure, contact DES at **(603) 271-4664.** For air quality forecasts and current air pollution levels in New Hampshire, call **1-800-935-SMOG** or visit the DES website at www.airquality.nh.gov.

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